MARVEL

014

SOULE
CAMUNCOLI
ORLANDINI
CURIEL

STAR WARS DARTH VADER

BURNING SEAS

Part II

Some time has passed since the ascension of Emperor Palpatine, the formation of his great Galactic Empire, and the descent of former Jedi Knight Anakin Skywalker into his new form as twisted half-man, half-machine Darth Vader – Sith apprentice to Palpatine.

Few Jedi remain in the galaxy as Vader and his Inquisitors have hunted the few survivors of Palpatine's Order 66. But a threat has risen to the Emperor's still-new, still-vulnerable regime, and Vader and his team are sent to the Outer Rim to handle it.

Now, a mysterious being is advising the great King Lee-Char of Mon Cala. The great Galactic Empire will no longer tolerate the defiance of the oceanic planet....

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Mon Cala.
The Battle Of
Dac City.
MULTIPLE TARGETS ACQUIRED.
HA!
SSSK!
STAND YOUR GROUND!
KZZCK!
DIE, INVADER SCUM!
FORWARD!
PTNG!
ZKK ZKK
ZKK
HNH.

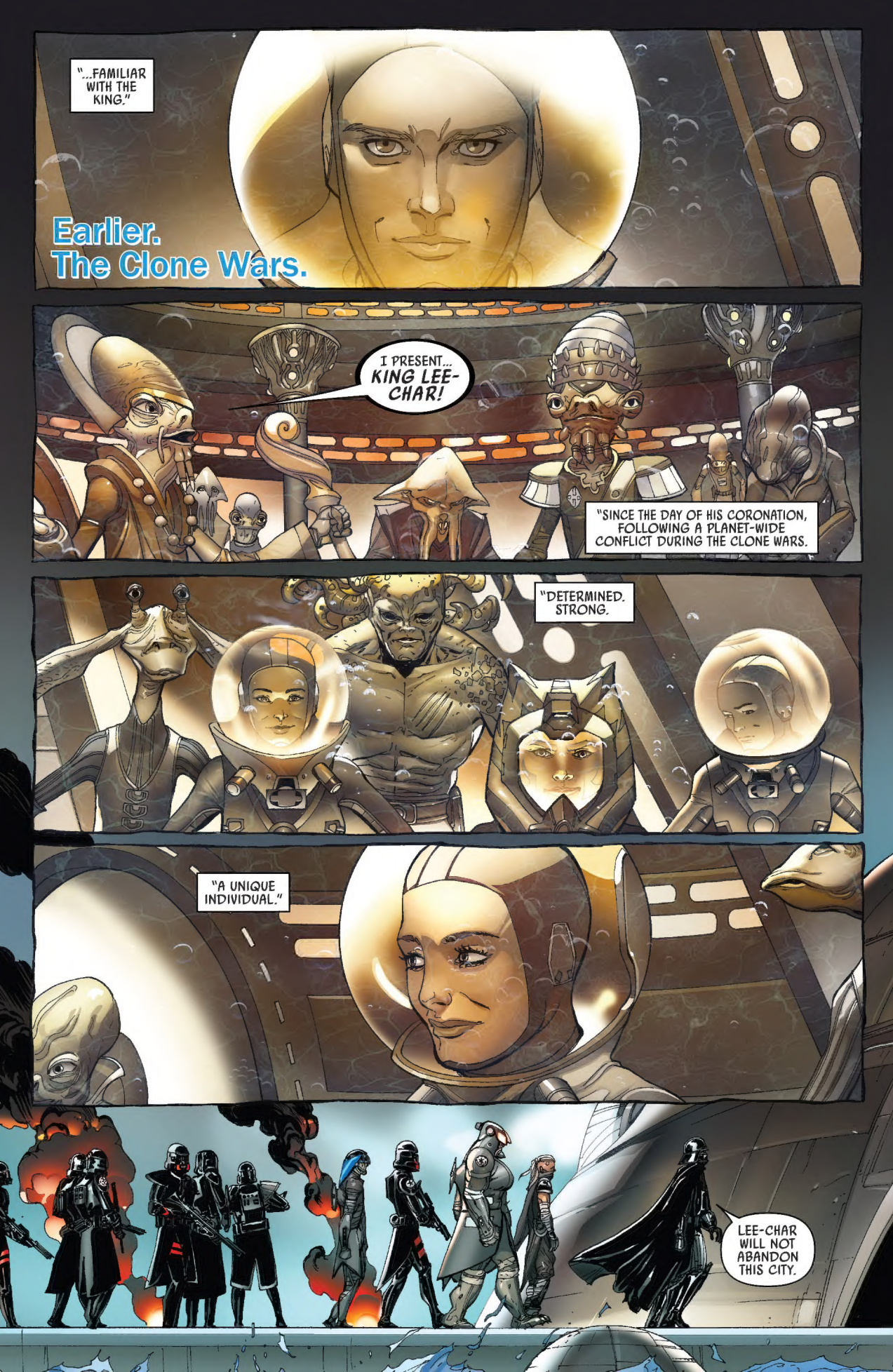
LANDING PLATFORM CLEAR, LORD VADER.
GOOD.
WE WILL PROCEED.

YOU HAVE ANY SENSE OF WHERE WE SHOULD BE HEADED?
YES.

UP.

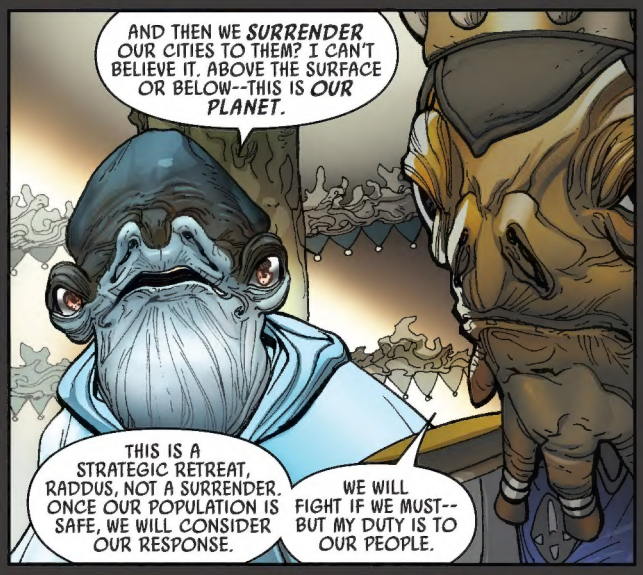
UP TO THE PALACE? YOU THINK THE JEDI WE'RE LOOKING FOR WOULD BE DUMB ENOUGH TO HANG OUT RIGHT NEAR THE KING?
I DO NOT, NINTH SISTER.
BUT KING LEE-CHAR MUST KNOW HOW TO CONTACT THE JEDI. WE WILL FIND HIM, AND WE WILL ASK.

NO DISRESPECT, LORD VADER, BUT THAT'S ASSUMING THE KING'S EVEN STILL UP THERE.
HE PROBABLY EVACUATED THE MINUTE THE EMPIRE LANDED AN ENTIRE BATTALION ON THIS ROCK.
NO, TENTH BROTHER. HE REMAINS.
I AM CERTAIN OF IT. I AM...


"...FAMILIAR WITH THE KING."
Earlier.
The Clone Wars.
I PRESENT... KING LEE-CHAR!
"SINCE THE DAY OF HIS CORONATION, FOLLOWING A PLANET-WIDE CONFLICT DURING THE CLONE WARS.
"DETERMINED. STRONG.
"A UNIQUE INDIVIDUAL."
LEE-CHAR WILL NOT ABANDON THIS CITY.

"NOT UNTIL THE BATTLE IS DONE."
ANY UPDATE FROM THE DEFENDERS, ACKBAR?
HOLDING THEIR OWN, MY KING, BUT THE EMPIRE HAS LANDED SUBSTANTIAL FORCES ON ALL OUR ABOVE GROUND SETTLEMENTS.
YOU KNOW WE'RE NOT AT OUR BEST ABOVE THE WAVES.

AS LONG AS THEY HOLD UNTIL THE EVACUATION IS COMPLETE.
THEY WILL HOLD, I PROMISE YOU THAT.
WE HAVE ALREADY MOVED OVER FIFTY PERCENT OF THE CIVILIANS BELOW THE SURFACE--IT WON'T BE LONG.

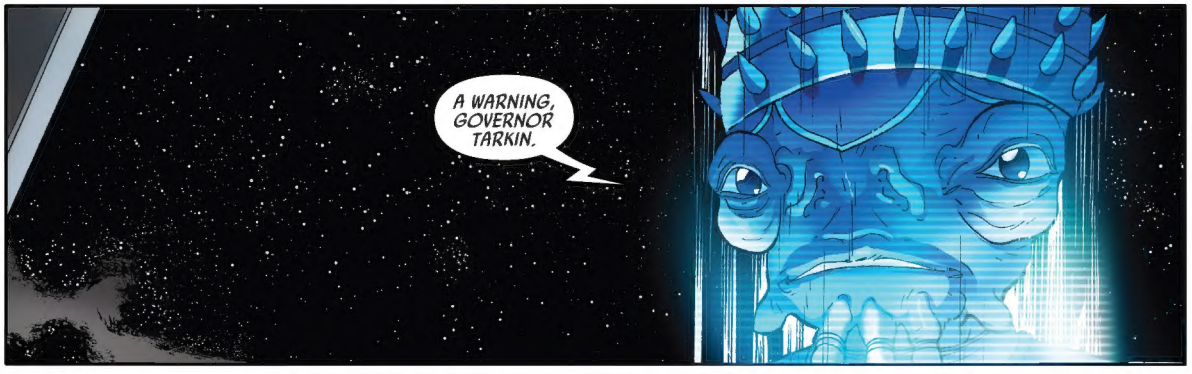

AND THEN WE SURRENDER OUR CITIES TO THEM? I CAN'T BELIEVE IT. ABOVE THE SURFACE OR BELOW--THIS IS OUR PLANET.
THIS IS A STRATEGIC RETREAT, RADDUS, NOT A SURRENDER. ONCE OUR POPULATION IS SAFE, WE WILL CONSIDER OUR RESPONSE.
WE WILL FIGHT IF WE MUST--BUT MY DUTY IS TO OUR PEOPLE.

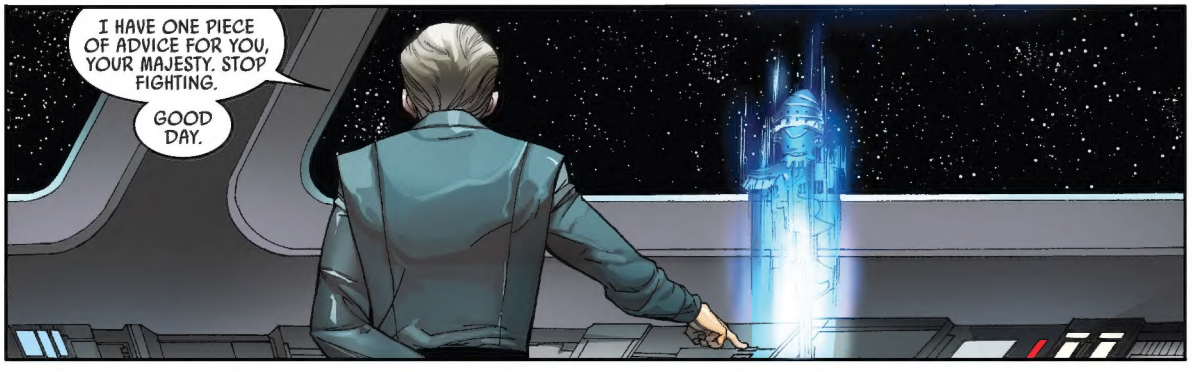
MY GOAL IS TO CONVINCE THE EMPIRE TO LEAVE WITHOUT SHEDDING THE BLOOD OF MON CALA.
I SEE TWO WAYS I MIGHT DO THAT. ONE SHEDS NO FURTHER BLOOD AT ALL.

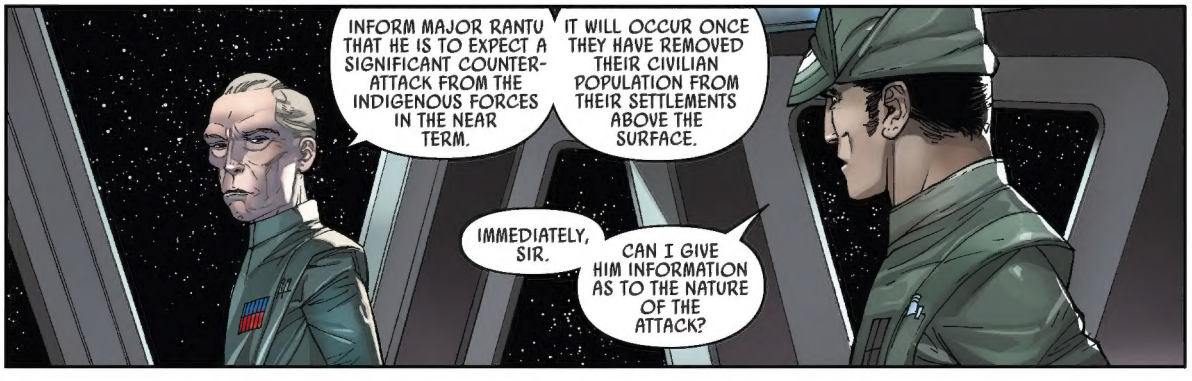
I WILL TRY THAT FIRST.

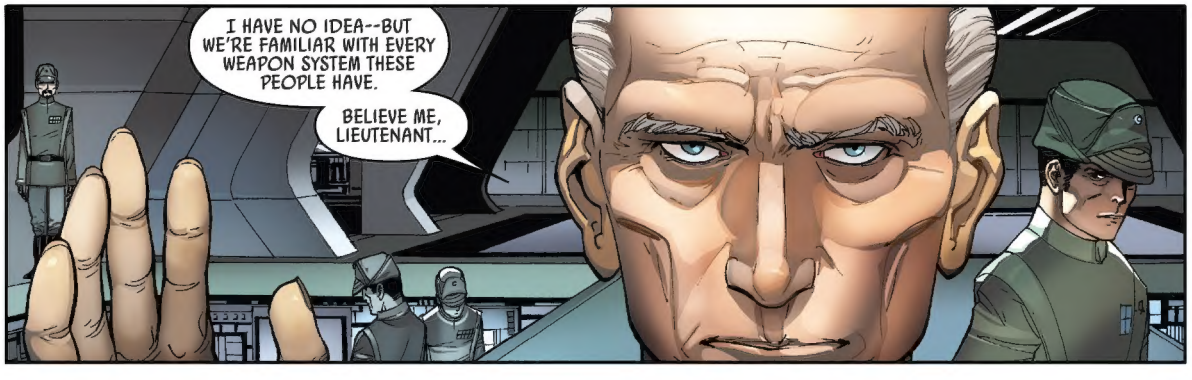
Imperial Star Destroyer Sovereign.
"GOVERNOR TARKIN, YOUR FORCES MUST BE WITHDRAWN IMMEDIATELY!"
THIS ATTACK IS COMPLETELY UNWARRANTED AND IN CLEAR VIOLATION OF OUR TREATY WITH THE EMPIRE!
UNWARRANTED, YOUR MAJESTY? NONSENSE.
AN IMPERIAL ENVOY WAS ASSASSINATED WHILE UNDER YOUR PROTECTION. EITHER YOUR PEOPLE KILLED HIM, OR YOU ARE NOT IN CONTROL OF YOUR POPULATION.
THIS IS EXACTLY THE SORT OF SITUATION THAT MERITS A MILITARY RESPONSE.
ORDER WILL COME TO MON CALA, ONE WAY OR THE OTHER.
I PROMISE YOU, WE HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE DEATH OF AMBASSADOR TELVAR. WE WERE NEGOTIATING WITH HIM IN GOOD FAITH.
HIS DEATH WOULD SERVE NO PURPOSE TO US!
IF THAT IS TRUE, THEN YOU WILL ORDER YOUR FORCES TO STAND DOWN AND ALLOW THE EMPIRE TO CONDUCT ITS OWN INVESTIGATION.
YOU ARE NOT INVESTIGATING... YOU ARE INVADING.
MON CALA IS LOYAL TO THE EMPIRE, BUT WE WILL NOT ALLOW YOU TO OCCUPY OUR LANDS AND KILL OUR SOLDIERS.
IF YOU PERSIST, WE WILL AGGRESSIVELY DEFEND OURSELVES.

IS THAT A THREAT?

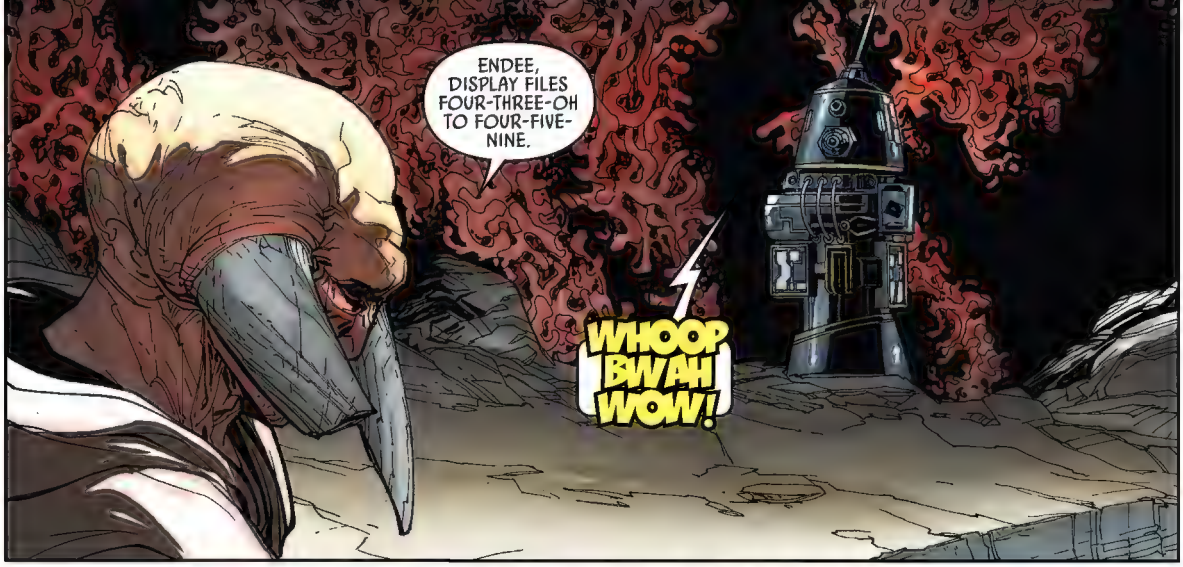

A WARNING, GOVERNOR TARKIN.

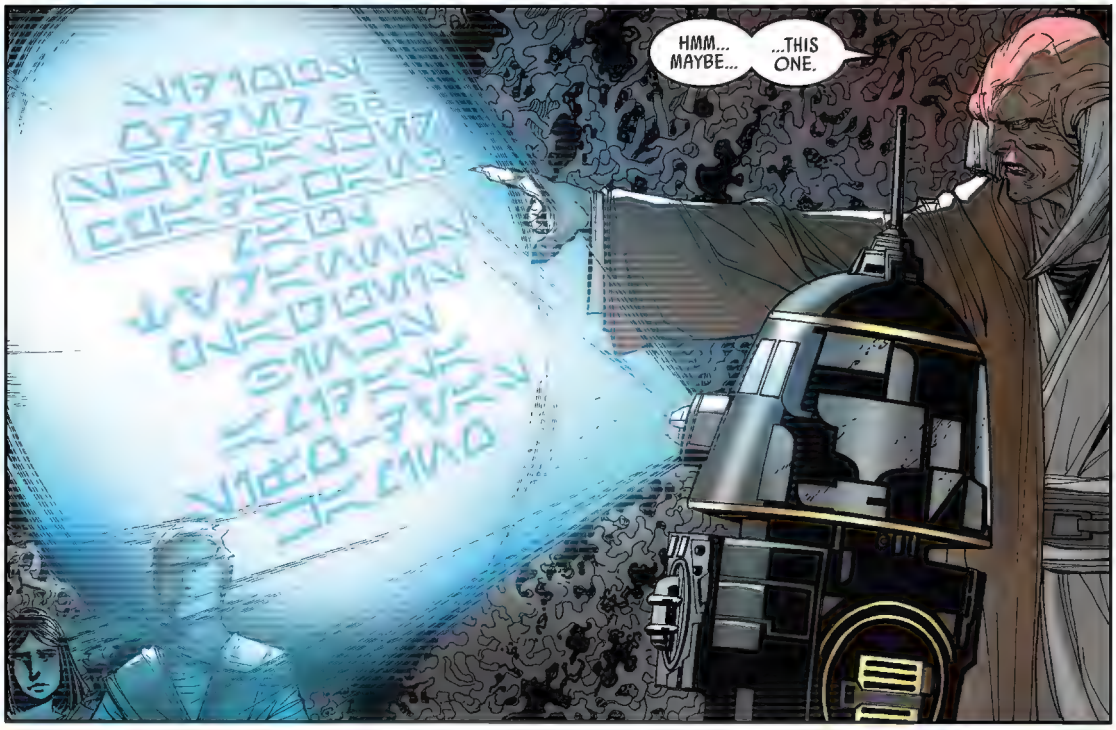

I HAVE ONE PIECE OF ADVICE FOR YOU, YOUR MAJESTY. STOP FIGHTING.
GOOD DAY.

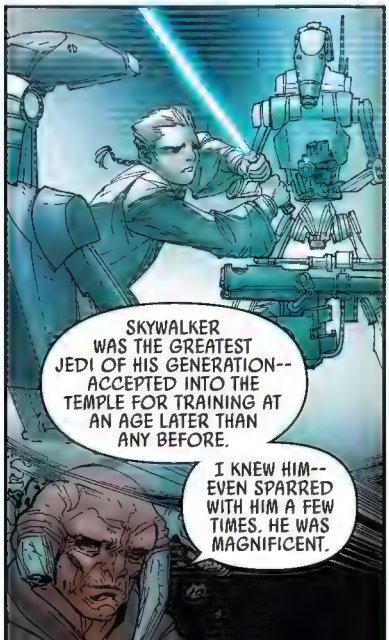

INFORM MAJOR RANTU THAT HE IS TO EXPECT A SIGNIFICANT COUNTER-ATTACK FROM THE INDIGENOUS FORCES IN THE NEAR TERM.
IT WILL OCCUR ONCE THEY HAVE REMOVED THEIR CIVILIAN POPULATION FROM THEIR SETTLEMENTS ABOVE THE SURFACE.
IMMEDIATELY, SIR.
CAN I GIVE HIM INFORMATION AS TO THE NATURE OF THE ATTACK?


I HAVE NO IDEA--BUT WE'RE FAMILIAR WITH EVERY WEAPON SYSTEM THESE PEOPLE HAVE.
BELIEVE ME, LIEUTENANT...

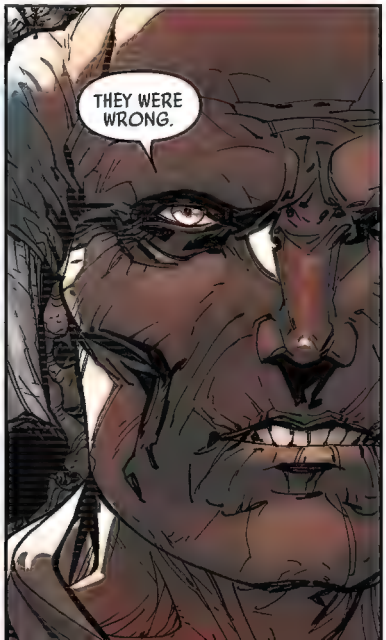
"...THERE ARE NO SURPRISES FOR US ON MON CALA."
SKYWALKER.
I DID NOT THINK PALPATINE WOULD SEND SKYWALKER.
I THOUGHT THIS MOMENT WOULD COME LATER. I THOUGHT I WOULD FORESEE IT.
THE FORCE DOES AS THE FORCE WILLS, I SUPPOSE.
SKYWALKER, MASTER BARR? WHO IS THAT?
WHY, VERLA, HE'S AT THE CENTER OF IT ALL.
ANAKIN SKYWALKER IS THE CHOSEN ONE.


ENDEE, DISPLAY FILES FOUR-THREE-OH TO FOUR-FIVE-NINE.
WHOOP BWAH WOW!


HMM... MAYBE...
...THIS ONE.

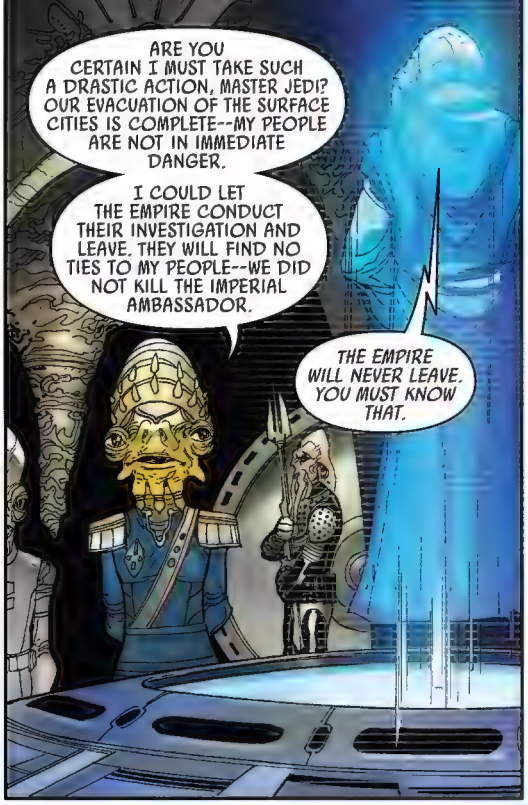

SKYWALKER WAS THE GREATEST JEDI OF HIS GENERATION--ACCEPTED INTO THE TEMPLE FOR TRAINING AT AN AGE LATER THAN ANY BEFORE.
I KNEW HIM--EVEN SPARRED WITH HIM A FEW TIMES. HE WAS MAGNIFICENT.

SOME ON THE JEDI COUNCIL BELIEVED HE WAS SENT TO BRING BALANCE TO THE FORCE, TO END DARKNESS ONCE AND FOR ALL.
EVEN THE GREAT OBI-WAN KENOBI THOUGHT SO.


THEY WERE WRONG.

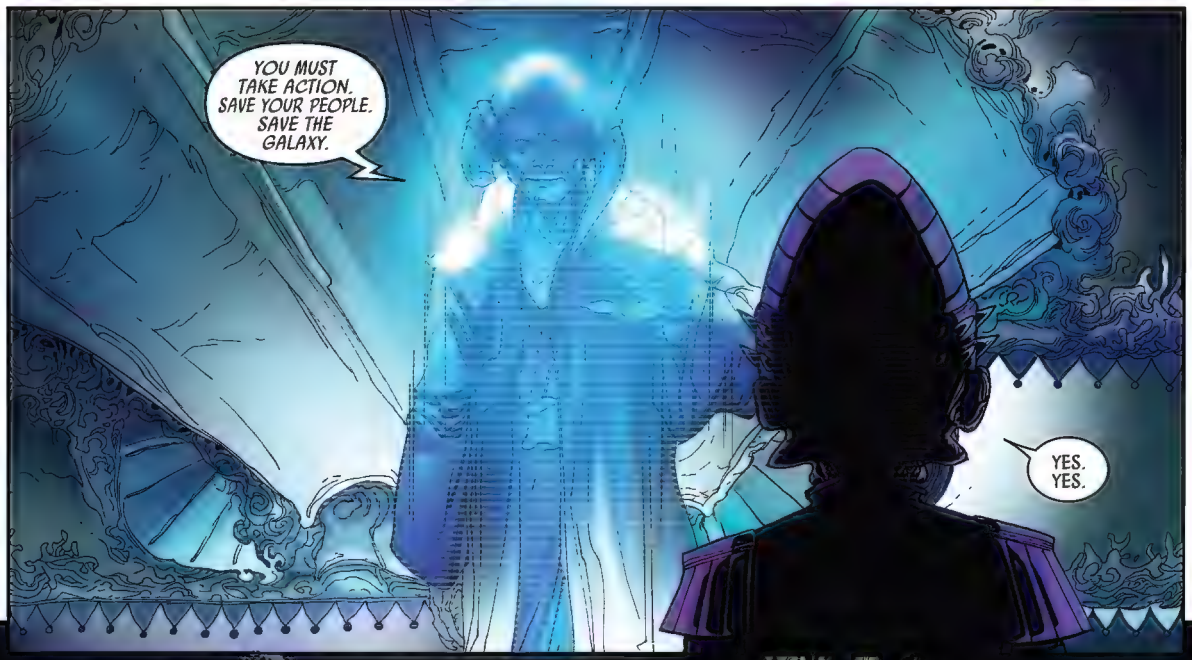
THIS IS AN IMAGE FROM A CORUSCANT SECURITY FORCE HOLOCAM STATIONED ABOVE THE TEMPLE DISTRICT ON THE NIGHT OF THE JEDI PURGE.
MOST OF THE FILES WERE ERASED, BUT I FOUND A SLICER WHO PULLED THIS OFF A BACKUP ARCHIVE.
I'VE BEEN STUDYING THE PURGE, TRYING TO UNDERSTAND HOW WE COULD LOSE SO COMPLETELY, SO QUICKLY.
I LEARNED ABOUT ORDER 66, POOR DELUDED DOOKU, JUST HOW DEEP IT WENT...BUT STILL, WE SHOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO FORESEE OUR DOOM.
WE WERE PEERING OUTWARD, WHEN WE SHOULD HAVE BEEN LOOKING AT OURSELVES.
SSK!
AT HIM.
PALPATINE'S CLONES DID THEIR PART, BUT THE REST... HE KILLED. EVEN THE YOUNGLINGS.
THE YOUNGLINGS, BY THE LIGHT.
HE HASN'T STOPPED, EITHER. HE HUNTS THE FEW SURVIVORS, ALONGSIDE HIS INQUISITORS--MORE FORMER JEDI, TRAITORS.
DARKNESS WAS EVERYWHERE INSIDE US, LIKE A CANCER, AND WE JUST...COULDN'T... SEE IT.
SKYWALKER'S BETRAYAL DID NOT COME WITHOUT COST. HE IS DARK NOW, INSIDE AND OUT.
HE CALLS HIMSELF DARTH VADER...BUT THE SINS OF ANAKIN SKYWALKER REMAIN THE SINS OF VADER.
EVEN THE POWER OF THE DARK SIDE CANNOT ERASE THE PAST.

MASTER BARR, IF PALPATINE'S ENFORCERS ARE FORMER JEDI, WHY DON'T YOU TELL SOMEONE? WOULDN'T THAT UNDERMINE THE EMPEROR'S RULE?
AH, DAREN... PERHAPS EARLIER, JUST AFTER HIS ASCENSION, IT MIGHT HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE.
BUT NOW...NO ONE WOULD CARE. EVEN IF ANYONE PAID ATTENTION, PALPATINE WOULD SIMPLY LIE, AS HE ALWAYS LIES.
AND IN THESE TIMES...IT IS SAFER TO BELIEVE THE LIE, AND SO THE LIE BECOMES THE TRUTH.
BUT THAT IS WHY WE ARE HERE. ONCE THE GALAXY SEES WHAT THE EMPIRE IS CAPABLE OF, THEY WILL RESIST.
JEDI AND SITH ARE ABSTRACT IDEAS FOR MOST. ALREADY, THEY FEEL LIKE RELICS OF A LOST AGE. BUT OPPRESSION AND FREEDOM--THESE ARE CONCEPTS ANYONE CAN UNDERSTAND.
THE JEDI MUST BE AVENGED, MASTER BARR. SEND US TO DESTROY THIS VADER.
AS EASY AS THAT, REBB? VADER IS THE MOST DANGEROUS MAN ALIVE, AND HIS INQUISITORS ARE NEARLY AS BAD. I HAVE ANOTHER PLAN.
IF IT SUCCEEDS, THE JEDI WILL BE AVENGED, THE GALAXY RID OF VADER AND HIS SPAWN, AND GREAT STEPS TAKEN TOWARD ENDING THE EMPIRE.
HOW?
WELL, THAT ALL DEPENDS ON THE KING.


ARE YOU CERTAIN I MUST TAKE SUCH A DRASTIC ACTION, MASTER JEDI? OUR EVACUATION OF THE SURFACE CITIES IS COMPLETE--MY PEOPLE ARE NOT IN IMMEDIATE DANGER.
I COULD LET THE EMPIRE CONDUCT THEIR INVESTIGATION AND LEAVE. THEY WILL FIND NO TIES TO MY PEOPLE--WE DID NOT KILL THE IMPERIAL AMBASSADOR.
THE EMPIRE WILL NEVER LEAVE. YOU MUST KNOW THAT.

THE FORCE HAS SHOWN ME WHAT THE EMPIRE WILL BECOME.
THESE AGGRESSIONS ON MON CALA ARE ONLY THE BEGINNING OF A RELENTLESS EROSION OF FREEDOM ACROSS EVERY SYSTEM, EVERY PLANET, EVERY BEING UNDER THEIR CONTROL.

BUT THE FORCE HAS SHOWN ME SOMETHING ELSE--THE MON CALAMARI, AT THE CENTER OF THE GALAXY'S LIBERATION FROM THE SHADOW OF THE EMPIRE.
THERE IS NO QUESTION--MY VISIONS ARE CLEAR--BUT IT CANNOT HAPPEN WITHOUT YOU, YOUR MAJESTY.


YOU MUST TAKE ACTION. SAVE YOUR PEOPLE. SAVE THE GALAXY.
YES. YES.

"I WILL SAVE THEM ALL."
TNK!

I HAVE ORDERED OUR DEFENDERS TO ABANDON THE SURFACE CITIES.
ACKBAR, YOU WILL COORDINATE PLANETARY DEFENSE IN THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE. RADDUS, THE SOUTH. I HAVE UTMOST CONFIDENCE IN YOU BOTH.
YOUR MAJESTY... YOU SEEM CERTAIN THAT THE EMPIRE'S AGGRESSIONS WILL ESCALATE. HAVE YOU TAKEN SOME ACTION?
I TOLD YOU I HAD TWO PLANS TO PUSH BACK THE IMPERIALS. THE FIRST FAILED.
"IT IS TIME FOR THE SECOND."
AND YOU, MY KING?
I WILL JOIN YOU SOON, BUT I WANT TO MAKE A FINAL ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE, AND I WANT TO DO IT FROM MY THRONE.
NOW GO. WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME.
NO.

YOUR MAJESTY.

NNNNGH!
TELL ME WHAT I WANT TO KNOW, AND THIS CAN ALL BE OVER.
THWWWSH
TELL ME... WHERE TO FIND THE JEDI.
I... I...
SPLASH

UH...WE MAY HAVE A PROBLEM HERE.

SHIELD.

THOOOOM

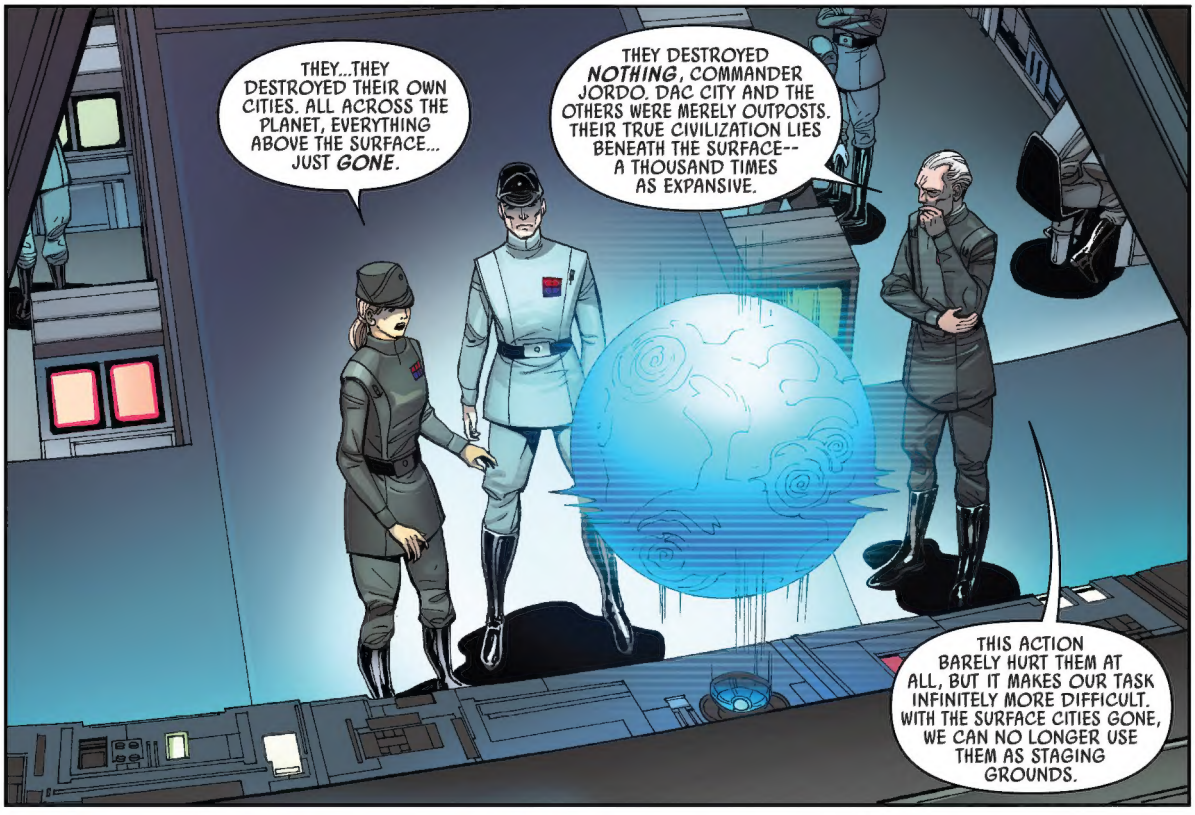
SSSSSSHHH

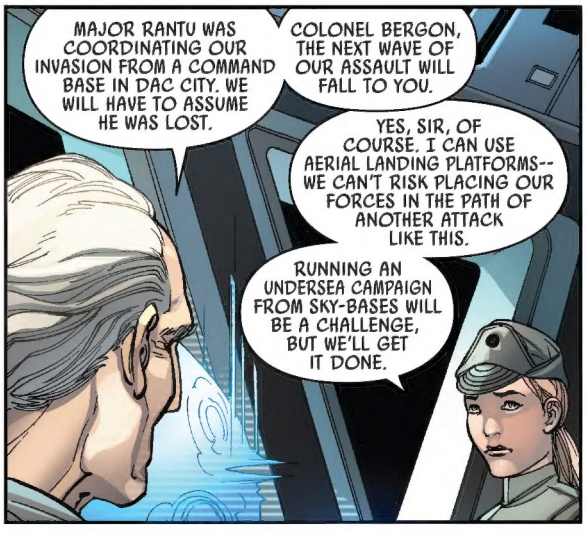
TOO...MUCH... NOT SURE WE CAN...

HNH.

FSSSSSHHH

NNNNGH--

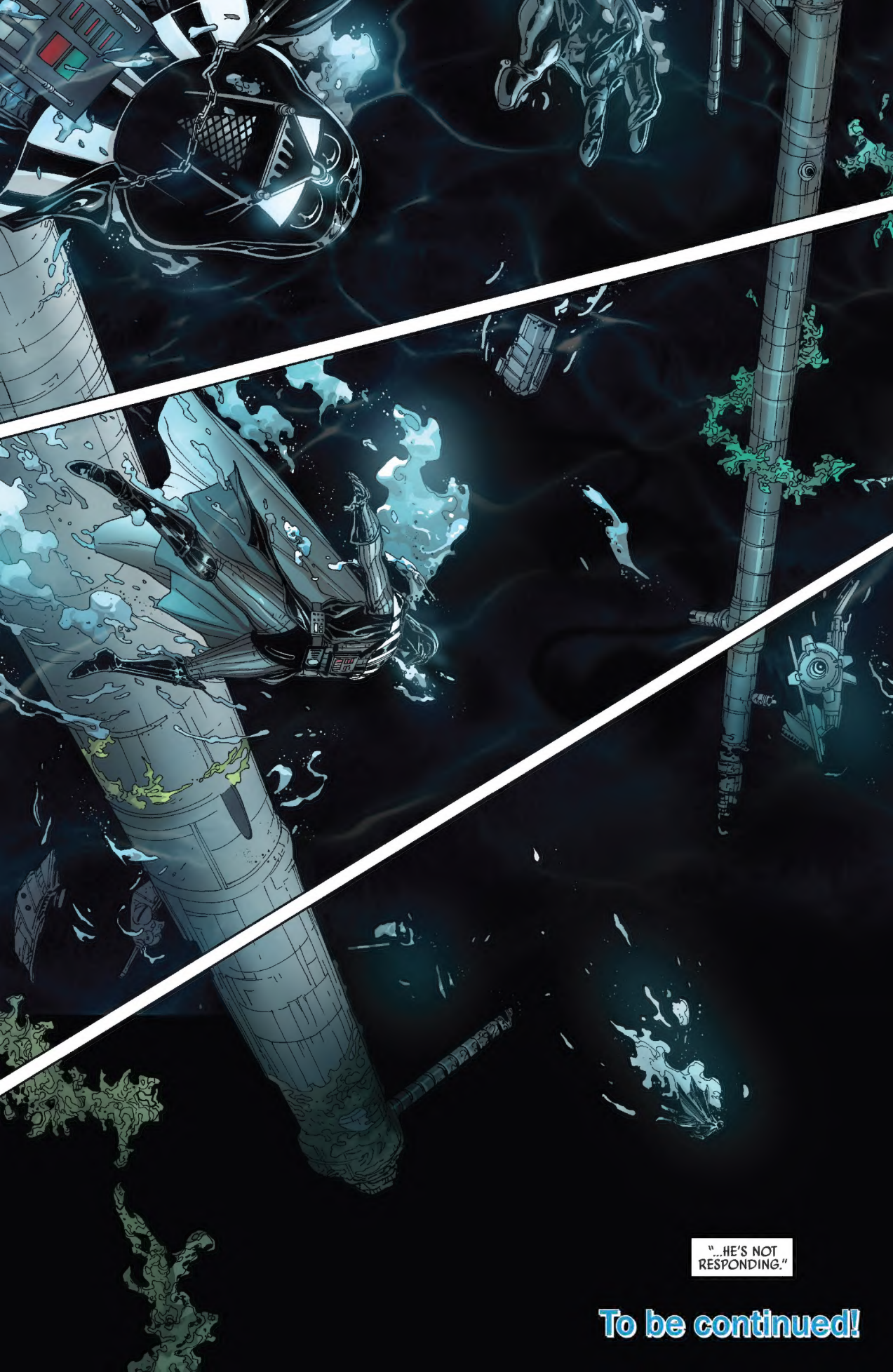

THEY...THEY DESTROYED THEIR OWN CITIES. ALL ACROSS THE PLANET, EVERYTHING ABOVE THE SURFACE... JUST GONE.
THEY DESTROYED NOTHING, COMMANDER JORDO. DAC CITY AND THE OTHERS WERE MERELY OUTPOSTS. THEIR TRUE CIVILIZATION LIES BENEATH THE SURFACE-- A THOUSAND TIMES AS EXPANSIVE.
THIS ACTION BARELY HURT THEM AT ALL, BUT IT MAKES OUR TASK INFINITELY MORE DIFFICULT. WITH THE SURFACE CITIES GONE, WE CAN NO LONGER USE THEM AS STAGING GROUNDS.


MAJOR RANTU WAS COORDINATING OUR INVASION FROM A COMMAND BASE IN DAC CITY. WE WILL HAVE TO ASSUME HE WAS LOST.
COLONEL BERGON, THE NEXT WAVE OF OUR ASSAULT WILL FALL TO YOU.
YES, SIR, OF COURSE. I CAN USE AERIAL LANDING PLATFORMS-- WE CAN'T RISK PLACING OUR FORCES IN THE PATH OF ANOTHER ATTACK LIKE THIS.
RUNNING AN UNDERSEA CAMPAIGN FROM SKY-BASES WILL BE A CHALLENGE, BUT WE'LL GET IT DONE.

COMMANDER JORDO-- WE JUST LOST SIGNIFICANT RESOURCES. YOU ARE THE IMPERIAL SECURITY BUREAU OFFICER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS PLANET.
HOW DID WE NOT KNOW THE MON CALAMARI POSSESSED THIS CAPABILITY? HOW?
I... I HAVE NO EXPLANATION, GOVERNOR TARKIN, AND NO EXCUSE.
I WILL... I WILL REDOUBLE MY EFFORTS. YOU WILL SEE. I WILL REDEEM MYSELF.

SEE THAT YOU DO.
IT IS A LONG FALL TO THE OCEAN.

ANY WORD FROM LORD VADER?
I'M SORRY, SIR...


"...HE'S NOT RESPONDING."
To be continued!

DARTH VADER
NEXT ISSUE: